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Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

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The Honorable Charles Jenkins
Frederick County Board of Commissioners
12 East Church St
Frederick MD 21701-5402

Dear Mr. Jenkins:

I write today to share my deep concern about the Transportation Planning Board's (TPB) recent vote to remove the project to widen westbound I-66 inside the Beltway from the Constrained Long Range Plan (CLRP). I was also disappointed to learn that a rarely used "weighted" vote was used when the desired outcome was not achieved by a standard vote. I have seen in news reports that this vote may be revisited in the near future and wanted to let you know about the importance of this project.

This project has already crossed many major hurdles and the first phase was on schedule to be bid for design/build activities this fall. In today's economy, where many "shovel-ready" projects are seeking federal funding in order to create jobs, it is disappointing that the TPB would shut down a project which already has almost \$30 million in dedicated federal funding and is just a few months away from starting. It is also important to note that this portion of I-66 has already undergone countless studies, including one approved by the TPB in 2004, which have determined that this section of I-66 is severely congested and would benefit from these spot improvements.

The footprint for widening I-66 outbound from the Rosslyn tunnel already exists. No homes would be taken and with quiet payment technology that is available today, the improvements could make the highway less noisy. An additional lane would also help flush out traffic during both the morning and evening rush hours and get more cars off of neighborhood streets in Arlington, in addition to improving air quality by moving idling cars sitting in congested traffic on the highway. Contrary to what some have said, it is my understanding that polling data has indicated that a majority of Arlington residents actually support widening I-66.

I-66 is clogged morning, noon and night, seven days a week. It is incredulous that anyone would oppose relieving traffic congestion on this choked road. This project is not only critical to reducing congestion, it is also a major safety issue, especially for our area's first responders. I-66 is often so congested that ambulances, fire trucks and police cars have difficulty maneuvering through traffic. Serious concerns also have been raised about the ability of I-66 to handle traffic in case of an emergency evacuation from the nation's capital.

I have worked hard to make rail to Dulles a reality and the federal government's recent approval of the project means that mass transit is coming and will help to relieve traffic congestion in this corridor.

Lastly, I would like to point out that on May 16, 2007, the TPB voted to approve this project. Given that this project has already been approved, I urge you to reconsider the decision made last week to remove the I-66 widening project from the CLRP and vote to improve traffic flow in northern Virginia.

Best wishes.

Sincerely,

Frank R. Wolf
Member of Congress

Handwritten note:
Moms and Dad
are sitting in
traffic everyday
and need your help
Thank You -